

Factionalism and Political Parties

Domestically, the presidency of Monroe (1817-1825) was termed the "era of good feelings." The phrase acknowledged the political triumph of the Republican Party over the Federalist Party, which had collapsed as a national force. All the same, this was a period of vigorous factional and regional conflict.

The end of the Federalists led to a brief period of factional politics and brought disarray to the practice of choosing presidential nominees by congressional party caucuses. For a time, state legislatures nominated candidates. In 1824 Tennessee and Pennsylvania chose Andrew Jackson, with South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun as his running mate. Kentucky selected Speaker of the House Henry Clay; Massachusetts, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, son of the second president, John Adams. A congressional caucus, widely derided as undemocratic, picked Secretary of the Treasury William Crawford.

Personality and sectional allegiance played important roles in determining the outcome of the election. Adams won the electoral votes from New England and most of New York; Clay won Kentucky, Ohio, and Missouri; Jackson won the Southeast, Illinois, Indiana, the Carolinas, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey; and Crawford won Virginia, Georgia, and Delaware. No candidate gained a majority in the Electoral College, so, according to the provisions of the

Constitution, the election was thrown into the House of Representatives, where Clay was the most influential figure. He supported Adams, who gained the presidency.

During Adams's administration, new party alignments appeared. Adams's followers, some of whom were former Federalists, took the name of "National Republicans" as emblematic of their support of a federal government that would take a strong role in developing an expanding nation. Though he governed honestly and efficiently, Adams was not a popular president. He failed in his effort to institute a national system of roads and canals. His coldly intellectual temperament did not win friends. Jackson, by contrast, had enormous popular appeal and a strong political organization. His followers coalesced to establish the Democratic Party, claimed direct lineage from the Democratic-Republican Party of Jefferson, and in general advocated the principles of small, decentralized government. Mounting a strong anti-Adams campaign, they accused the president of a "corrupt bargain" for naming Clay secretary of state. In the election of 1828, Jackson defeated Adams by an overwhelming electoral majority.

Jackson – Tennessee politician, fighter in wars against Native Americans on the Southern frontier, and hero of the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812 – drew his support from the "common people." He

came to the presidency on a rising tide of enthusiasm for popular democracy. The election of 1828 was a significant benchmark in the trend toward broader voter participation. By then most states had either enacted universal white male suffrage or minimized property requirements. In 1824 members of the Electoral College in six states were still selected by the state legislatures. By 1828 presidential electors were chosen by popular vote in every state but Delaware and South Carolina. These developments were the products of a widespread sense that the people should rule and that government by traditional elites had come to an end.

1. Whose presidency (1817-1825) was referred to as the “era of good feelings”?
 - a. Andrew Jackson
 - b. Henry Clay
 - c. James Monroe
 - d. John C. Calhoun

2. What four candidates ran for U.S. president in the 1824 election?

3. The political dominance of a single political party made the selection of presidential candidates much simpler.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. Explain how John Quincy Adams gained the presidency.

5. John Quincy Adams was an unpopular president.

- a. True
- b. False

6. The Democratic Party, founded by followers of Andrew Jackson, advocated the principles of small, decentralized government.

- a. True
- b. False

7. Describe a development that was the product “of a widespread sense that the people should rule and that government by traditional elites had come to an end.”
